



NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND



Growth Models: Ensuring Grade-Level Proficiency for All Students by 2014

May 17, 2006

"When it comes to ensuring that all students have a quality education, results are paramount. States that show good faith and good results deserve the opportunity for new ways to show those results."

--Secretary Margaret Spellings

In November 2005, Secretary Spellings announced a pilot program in which States could propose a growth-based accountability model to meet the bright line goals of the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)*. The Department intended to gather data to test the idea that growth models can be fair, reliable and innovative methods to measure student improvement and to hold schools accountable for results.

- Growth models track individual student achievement from one year to the next, giving schools credit for student improvement over time.
- A pilot program enables the Department to rigorously evaluate growth models and ensure their alignment with *NCLB*, and to share these results with other States.
- The Department has received numerous State proposals to participate in the pilot program, with the goal of approving the highest-quality growth models for the 2005-06 school year.

Today, Secretary Spellings approves Tennessee and North Carolina to participate in the growth model pilot program.

- Tennessee is approved to implement its growth model as part of determining adequate yearly progress for the 2005-06 school year.
- North Carolina is approved to implement its growth model, provided that its assessment system is fully approved by July 1, 2006.

These States are meeting the bright line principles of *NCLB*, and their growth model proposals meet all seven core principles outlined last November. Those principles are:

1. Ensure that all students are proficient by 2014, and set annual goals to ensure that the achievement gap is closing for all groups of students;
2. Set expectations for annual achievement based upon meeting grade-level proficiency, not based on student background or school characteristics;
3. Hold schools accountable for student achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics;
4. Ensure that all students in tested grades are included in the assessment and accountability system, hold schools and districts accountable for the performance of each student subgroup, and include all schools and districts;
5. Include assessments in each of grades three through eight and high school in both reading/language arts and mathematics, and ensure they have been operational for more than one year and receive approval through the *NCLB* peer review process for the 2005-06 school year. The assessment system must also produce comparable results from grade to grade and year to year;

Visit www.nclb.gov for more information on *No Child Left Behind*.

6. Track student progress as part of the State data system; and
7. Include student participation rates and student achievement on a separate academic indicator in the State accountability system.

The Department used a rigorous peer review process to ensure that the selection process was fair and transparent for all participating States. A panel of nationally recognized experts reviewed and made final recommendations on the States' proposals.

- The Department will rigorously monitor and evaluate these States as part of the pilot.
- Six additional States had been sent to the peer reviewers for consideration: Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, and Oregon.
- These six States did not meet the necessary criteria in order to be approved for the 2005-06 school year. They will have the opportunity to consider the peer reviewers' feedback and submit revised proposals for consideration for the 2006-07 school year.
- Up to 10 State plans may be approved in the growth model pilot.

The peer reviewers represent a wide range of perspectives and expertise, from academia to the private sector to State and local organizations. They include:

- Dr. Eric Hanushek, Stanford University / Dr. Chris Schatschneider, Florida State University / Dr. David Francis, University of Houston / Dr. Margaret Goertz, University of Pennsylvania / Kati Haycock, The Education Trust / William Taylor, Citizens Commission on Civil Rights / Sharon Lewis (ret.), Council of the Great City Schools / Dr. Robert Mendro, Dallas Independent School District / Dr. Jeff Nellhaus, Massachusetts Department of Education / Dr. Mitchell Chester, Ohio Department of Education.

The Department has conducted the review and approval process in a thorough and timely way:

- June/July 2005 The Department holds working group meetings on the potential use of growth models to meet the goals of *NCLB*.
- November 21, 2005 The Department announces the eligibility criteria for States to apply for the growth model pilot program through a letter to the States.
- February 17, 2006 Deadline for States to apply to be considered for the growth model pilot for the 2005-06 school year.
- March 2006 Proposals from eight States (Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, North Carolina, Oregon, and Tennessee) are forwarded to the peer reviewers for consideration.
- April 2006 The peer reviewers meet to consider State proposals.
- May 17, 2006 The Department announces Tennessee for approval and North Carolina for conditional approval in the growth model pilot program for 2005-06.
- September 15, 2006 Deadline for six States that were previously peer-reviewed to submit revised proposals to the Department for consideration for the 2006-07 school year.
- October 2006 Second peer review for any of the six States that submit revised proposals.
- November 1, 2006 Deadline for States to submit new growth model proposals to the Department for the 2006-07 school year. The overall limit of approved plans will remain at ten.

A detailed description of the peer review guidance for the NCLB growth model pilot applications can be found at: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/growthmodelguidance.pdf>